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ENVIRONMENTAL ATTITUDE OF PROSPECTIVE TEACHERS

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ABSTRACT

The urgent requirement of today's world is the conservation and preservation of the environment. Human activities have inflicted significant harm on the environment, impacting not only human existence but also the survival of other species and disrupting ecosystems. The present study aims to investigate the attitudes of prospective teachers regarding the environment in relation to their gender (male and female), educational background (graduate and post-graduate), and streams of study (science and arts). Findings of the study revealed that no significant difference was found in environmental attitude of prospective teachers with regard to gender and educational qualification. However, significant difference in environmental attitude was observed between arts and science prospective teachers.

INTRODUCTION

Environment support and sustain human life on earth by providing basic necessities for their survival. No human can live without food, water, and air. Our environment sustains life by offering these vital elements. However, in the pursuit of modernization, human activities are directly or indirectly impacting or exploiting nature at an irreversible pace, contaminating the food we consume, the water we drink, and polluting the air we inhale. As stated by Sarma and Sharma (2021) one of the most significant challenge of the 21st century is environmental degradation. Currently, climate change stands as one of the significant challenges confronting the entire globe. The effects of climate change have been observed in every region, making life increasingly difficult with each passing year. Unless people change their attitudes toward the environment that supports and nurtures human life, a day may come where Earth becomes incapable of sustaining life.

Environmental education is being emphasized and prioritized in formal education systems worldwide. However, acquiring environmental knowledge alone may not be enough to make a fruitful impact on students approach towards environment, without a change in their attitudes. Formation of right attitude towards environment is essential to become more responsible towards its protection and conservation. Teachers plays an important role in shaping the attitudes of their students. As per Zachariou et al. (2017), educators have a significant impact on influencing students' attitudes and behaviors regarding the environment. As for many learners, teachers serve as their role models whom they imitate and emulate. Prospective teachers are the educators of tomorrow who will bear the responsibility of shaping the behaviour of the next generation. Therefore, focusing on their attitude toward the environment is crucial since they hold the potential to cultivate a more responsible outlook among their students regarding environmental issues.

Milfont & Schultz (2018, p.338) described Environmental Attitudes as "evaluative beliefs, emotions, and/or intentions regarding activities or issues related to the environment." According to Dunlap & Jones (2002, p.483), Environmental Attitudes refer to "concern for environmental quality or 'environmental concern'." Additionally, Schultz et al. (2004, p. 31) stated that Environmental Attitudes encompass "the set of beliefs, emotions, and behavioral intentions that a person has concerning activities or issues related to the environment." Therefore, Environmental Attitudes can be understood as an individual's concern for the condition of the environment and the evaluation of human actions that may influence it. Environmental attitude also encompasses the beliefs and intentions individuals hold about environmental issues.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Sarma and Sharma (2021) in the study, titled "A Comparative Study on the Environmental Awareness and Environmental Attitude among the Undergraduate Students" revealed that significant difference exists between commerce and arts under graduate students in terms of their awareness towards the environment, however, no significant difference was found in their attitude towards the environment.

Bala & Grover (2024) in the study, titled "Attitude of female prospective teachers towards environment" found that female prospective teachers have positive attitude towards environment. Further, it was found that no significant difference exists between rural and urban female prospective teachers attitude towards environment.

Kumar (2017) carried out a study on the title "A study of attitude of teachers towards environmental education at secondary level". Results revealed that no significant difference exists between male and female and rural and urban teachers, however, significant difference exists between arts and science teachers.

Barua & Senapati (2021) conducted a study on the title, " Environmental attitude of the under graduate students of

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Dibrugarh district". Findings indicated that no significant difference in environmental attitude was found between male and female, however, significant difference exists between rural and urban under graduate students.

Sowmya & Kumar (2023) carried out a on the title, "A study on environmental attitude among secondary school students of Mysore district". Findings revealed no significant difference exists between male and female, rural and urban secondary school students attitude towards environment.

Objectives of the study

1. To compare environmental attitude of male and female Prospective Teachers.
2. To compare environmental attitude of Prospective Teachers with respect to educational qualification.
3. To compare environmental attitude of Prospective Teachers with respect to stream of study

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference in the environmental attitude between male and female Prospective Teachers.
2. There is no significant difference in the environmental attitude between Graduate and Post graduate Prospective Teachers
3. There is no significant difference in the environmental attitude between Science and Arts stream Prospective Teachers.

METHODOLOGY

Population and Sample of the Study

The population of the study comprised of all the prospective teachers from College of Teacher Education in Kohima, Nagaland. For the present study,71 samples were chosen using simple random sampling.

Tool Used in the Present Study

The Research tool used for the study was 'Environment Attitude Scale', developed by Dr. Haseen Taj.

RESULT AND ANALYSIS

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the environmental attitude between male and female Prospective Teachers.

Table 1 : Result of t-test in respect of Environmental attitude of Male and Female Prospective Teachers

Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	'P' value	Remarks
Male	29	176.93	15.21	69	0.468	Not significant at 0.05 level
Female	42	179.69	15.96			

From above Table 1, it is observed that the mean score of male and female Prospective Teachers' attitude towards environment were 176.93 and 179.69 with standard deviation 15.21 and 15.96 respectively. It was observed that the 'P' value (0.468) for Environmental attitude between male and female student teachers is higher than the level of significance at 0.05. Thus, the result showed that there is no statistically significant difference between male and female Prospective Teachers' attitude towards Environment. Therefore, we failed to reject the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the environmental attitude between male and female Prospective Teachers.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the environmental attitude between Graduate and Post graduate Prospective Teachers.

Table 2: Result of t-test in respect of Environmental attitude of Graduate and Post Graduate Prospective Teachers.

Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	'P' value	Remarks
Graduate	35	176.22	15.03	69	0.217	Not significant at 0.05 level
Post Graduate	36	180.83	16.04			

From above Table 2, it is observed that the mean score of Graduate and Post graduate Prospective Teachers' attitude towards environment were 176.22 and 180.83 with standard deviation 15.03 and 16.04 respectively. It was observed that the 'P' value (0.217) for Environmental attitude between Graduate and Post graduate Prospective Teachers is higher than the level of significance at 0.05. Thus, the result showed that there is no statistically significant difference Graduate and Post graduate Prospective Teachers' attitude towards Environment. Therefore, we failed to reject the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the environmental attitude between Graduate and Post graduate Prospective Teachers.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference in the environmental attitude between Science and Arts stream Prospective Teachers.

Table 3 : Result of t-test in respect of Environmental attitude of Science and Arts Prospective Teachers

Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	'P' value	Remarks
Science	31	183.87	18.20	69	0.011	Significant at 0.05 level
Arts	40	174.45	11.95			

From above Table 3, it is observed that the mean score of Science and Arts Prospective Teachers' attitude towards environment were 183.87 and 174.45 with standard deviation 18.20 and 11.95 respectively. It was observed that the 'P' value (0.011) for Environmental attitude between Science and Arts Prospective Teachers is less than the level of significance at 0.05. Thus, the result showed that there is statistically significant difference between Science and Arts Prospective Teachers' attitude towards Environment. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the environmental attitude between Science and Arts stream Prospective Teachers.

DISCUSSION

The present study found that no statistical significance difference

exists in the environmental attitude between male and female Prospective Teachers. This result was also supported by studies of Kumar (2017), Barua & Senapati (2021) and Sowmya & Kumar (2023). The result implied that gender does not influence attitude of prospective teachers towards environment. Additionally, the study found that there is no statistical significance difference in the environmental attitude between Graduate and Post graduate Prospective Teachers. The result implied that educational qualification of student teachers does not make a difference in their attitude towards environment. However, the results revealed that significant difference exists between science and arts Prospective Teachers in their attitude towards environment. This result is also supported by Kumar (2017). The notable difference may arise because science student teachers may be more aware about the environment issues than arts student teachers.

CONCLUSION

Our environment is deteriorating at an alarming rate due to human behaviors and decisions. It is crucial to conserve and safeguard our environment before the situation worsens. An individual's mindset toward the environment can significantly alter their views and inspire actions to protect it, both personally and within the community. The attitudes of future educators towards the environment are particularly important, as they have the ability to shape their students' appreciation for it. Therefore, educational stakeholders should prioritize this issue and take meaningful steps to improve the environmental attitudes of aspiring teachers

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